

Prestige Class
Gray Guard
Light Against the Darkness
By Creighton Broadhurst



This column aims to provide players with tips on creating effective and interesting characters of various types. Whether you're a beginning player creating your very first character or an experienced gamer looking to put some punch into an old standby, this column is for you.

Assets

Gray Guards (*Complete Scoundrel* pg. 40) are holy warriors who have taken vows to defeat evil no matter the personal cost.

- **Good BAB:** A gray guard's base attack bonus advances as that of a fighter.
- **Good Fortitude Saves:** A gray guard uses the best progression for Fortitude saving throws (Table 3-1 in the *Player's Handbook*) in the game.
- **Good Will Saves:** A gray guard uses the best progression for Will saving throws (Table 3-1 in the *Player's Handbook*) in the game.
- **Good Class Skills:** A gray guard's class skills include Concentration, Hide, Move Silently, and Spellcraft, which are all relevant to his role within an adventuring group.
- **Spells:** Every even-numbered class level, a gray guard gains new spells per day as if he had gained a level in a divine spellcasting class he belonged to before becoming a gray guard.
- **Good Class Abilities:** At every class level, gray guards gain either a useful special ability or an increase in their spellcasting abilities. Sometimes, they gain more than one ability, or they gain a new ability and enhanced spellcasting powers. Several of their class abilities -- lay on hands and smite evil -- stack with those gained by levels in paladin.
- **Flexible Morality:** Gray guards are ethically more flexible than a normal paladin. They have seen the true extent of evil in the world and understand that occasionally, extreme actions are necessary to defeat evil. While breaking his code of conduct still causes a gray guard to lose his gray guard and paladin abilities, the *atonement* to regain them is less severe. (The cleric casting *atonement* does not expend 500 XP as normal provided the gray guard's actions were in support of good and righteousness).



Weaknesses

The gray guard's advantages come at a price. Here are a few things to consider when designing a gray guard character.

- **Poor Reflex Saves:** Gray guards have the worst progression for Reflex saving throws (Table 3-1 in the *Player's Handbook*) in the game. Unfortunately, this disadvantage stacks with a paladin's woeful Reflex saving throw, making this a major weakness of the prestige class.
- **Few Skill Points:** Gray guards only receive skill points equal to 2 + their Intelligence bonus at every class level gained.
- **Hard Qualification:** Only lawful good characters with the lay on hands class feature may become gray guards, which limits membership of this prestige class to those with at least two levels of paladin.

Playing a Gray Guard

People who play efficient gray guards should keep the following in mind.

Character Build

Gray guards must have at least two levels of paladin and, assuming they accumulate the necessary ranks in

knowledge (religion) and Sense Motive, can theoretically take a level of gray guard at 6th level. Many gray guards, though, pick up a level or two of fighter to improve their combat options, delaying their qualification because of the fighter's poor range of class skills and lack of skill points. Other gray guards take a few levels of cleric or favored soul to boost their spellcasting abilities and increase their flexibility within the party. A few truly devout individuals take levels of monk. These holy warriors have many more abilities than a normal gray guard has, but their hit points and Armor Class are usually lower than normal. Most gray guards are human or half-elf, but a dwarf with high Charisma can also make an effective member of this prestige class.

Gray guards must have 8 ranks of Knowledge (religion) and 4 ranks of Sense Motive but also benefit from spending ranks on Concentration, Handle Animal, and Intimidate. Those able to call a paladin's mount should also invest in Ride.

Lightning Reflexes is a crucial feat for a gray guard, because it helps offset his poor Reflex saving throw. Weapon Focus with his preferred weapon is also a good choice (as is Weapon Specialization if he has the requisite levels of fighter). If the party has no cleric, the gray guard should consider Extra Turning, Empower Turning (*Complete Divine* pg. 81) and any of the other divine feats from *Complete Divine*.

Combat

Whatever a gray guard's exact class mix, they are normally to be found in the thick of battle. Thus, a good armor class and high hit points are crucial for a gray guard's long-term survival prospects. Generally, gray guards should wear the heaviest armor available (unless there is an overriding reason not to), and it should be enchanted at the earliest opportunity. An *amulet of health* is also useful, as it boosts a gray guard's hit point total (and already good Fortitude save).

While not as effective in combat as a single-classed fighter, gray guards are still among the best warriors in any group. Gray guards should focus on the use of one type of weapon -- given their probable class mix and statistics, most gray guards specialize in melee as opposed to ranged attacks. Their melee weapon should be enchanted wherever possible. They should also carry a variety of weapons to overcome as many different damage reductions as possible. A backup morningstar (bludgeoning and piercing damage) and a halberd (piercing or slashing damage) are enough to overcome mundane damage reduction. Making one of these from cold iron and the other from adamantite and carrying a few vials of *silversheen* and oil of *magic weapon* increases a gray guard's ability to overcome more exotic damage reductions.

Because they have levels of paladin, they can also make an effective back-up healer. Gray guards should always carry scrolls or a wand of *cure light wounds* (or more powerful healing at higher levels).

Sample Gray Guard: Ellinka

Clad in black robes, this albino human female moves with feline grace.

Ellinka CR 9

Female human paladin 3/monk 4/gray guard 2

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +4

Aura courage (10 ft., allies +4 against fear)

Languages Common

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 14; Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Mobility

(+2 Dex, +2 class, +1 deflection, +1 natural)

hp 57 (9 HD)

Immune disease, fear

Resist evasion

Fort +13, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13; +2 against enchantments

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee unarmed strike +11/+6 (1d8+2) or

unarmed strike +9/+9/+4 (1d8+2) with flurry of blows

Ranged mwk heavy crossbow +10 (1d10/19-20)

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +10

Atk Options Combat Intuition, Stunning Fist 6/day (DC 16), flurry of blows, *ki* strike (magic), smite evil 1/day (+2 attack, +3 damage)

Special Actions debilitating touch (DC 14), lay on hands 10 points/day

Combat Gear potion of *barkskin* (+4), potion of *cure serious wounds*, potion of *shield of faith* (+2), *wand of cure light wounds* (50 charges)

Paladin Spells Prepared (CL 1st):

1st -- *bleed*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)

At Will -- *detect evil*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 14

SQ sacrament of trust, slow fall 20 ft.

Feats Combat Intuition*, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Toughness**, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Stunning Fist, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Balance +4, Heal +3, Hide +4, Jump +13, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Sense Motive +6, Spot +4, Swim +5, Tumble +11

Possessions combat gear plus *cloak of resistance* +1, masterwork heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, *gloves of dexterity* +2, *ring of protection* +1, *amulet of natural armor* +1

Combat Intuition (Ex) Ellinka gains a +1 insight bonus to melee attacks against an opponent she made a melee attack against during the previous round. Additionally, she can, as a free action, use Sense Motive (+10) to assess the challenge presented by a single opponent (*Complete Adventurer* pg. 102).

* See *Complete Adventurer* pg. 106

** See *Complete Warrior* pg. 101

Ellinka had the following ability scores before racial adjustments, Hit Die ability score increases, and stat boosting items: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Feedback

Have a spell combination you use with the spellwarp sniper? Any additional advice you would include for this prestige class? Let us know, at dndfeedback@wizards.com.

About the Author

Creighton Broadhurst is a member of [Living Greyhawk](#)'s Circle of Six and a mad-keen **World of Greyhawk** fan. His hobbies include trying to stop his house falling down (which appears to be harder than you would think) and trying to survive the Savage Tide (which appears to be harder than you would think). He can be reached at creighton@greyworks.co.uk